

MEETING #35 – October 27

At a Joint Town Hall Meeting Madison County Board of Supervisors and the Madison County School Board on October 27, 2016 at the Madison County High School Auditorium located at 68 Mountaineer Drive:

PRESENT

Madison County Board of Supervisors

R. Clay Jackson, Chairman
Jonathon Weakley, Vice-Chairman
Kevin McGhee, Member
Robert Campbell, Member
Charlotte Hoffman, Member
Daniel J. Campbell, County Administrator
Clarissa Berry, Commonwealth Attorney

Madison County School Board

Barry Penn Hollar, Chairman
Doreen Jenkins, Vice-Chairman
Karen Allen, Member
Robert Chappell, Member
Joseph Parker

Opening of Meeting:

Chairman Jackson welcomed all for attending tonight's session and asked that everyone:
Follow the golden rule
Be courteous and respectful
All speakers will be given an opportunity to speak

1. Call to Order

Madison County School Board:

Barry Penn Hollar, Chairman, called the meeting of the Madison County School Board to order; thanked the Madison County Board of Supervisors for initiating the joint town hall meeting; welcomed all for attending tonight's session.

Commonwealth Attorney:

Clarissa Berry, Commonwealth Attorney, thanked the governing boards for allowing her to be present.

Madison County Board of Supervisors:

Chairman Jackson called the meeting of the Madison County Board of Supervisors to order. A quorum was established.

2. Pledge of Allegiance & Moment of Silence

Chairman Jackson noted the following:

- ✓ Madison County Planning Commission: Lloyd Williams, Commission member, will be making comments pertaining to a survey regarding the annual five-year review of the County's comprehensive plan
- ✓ Madison County School System: The school system will be releasing an online citizen survey

Madison County Planning Commission – Lloyd Williams (Madison County Planning Commission Vice-Chairman)

Lloyd Williams, Commission member, was present and provided highlights pertaining to State guidelines concerning the County's comprehensive plan (i.e. updated every five years); specifics of the contents of the plan were provided (i.e. data trends, goals/objectives/strategies to envision the future of the County), and also focused on the rationale for the County's ordinances that pertain to various property zones (i.e. (i.e. agriculture, residential industrial, mixed use, commercial, etc.). He also advised that the Commission is developing a citizen survey in order to gain insight as to the public's views on the:

- County's strengths/weaknesses
- Possible barriers that exist within the locality;

And

- What (if any) opportunities the community would like see initiated here

Further comments focused on the County's history and how ordinances have played a significant part in the past and present development of Madison County, and trends recorded by the Rappahannock Rapidan Regional Commission (i.e. population, number of businesses, roadways, farm size, acreage, etc.). Citizens are encouraged to reach out to the Madison County Planning Commission, or visit the County's website [www.madisonco.virginia.gov] then scroll to the "Zoning Department"] and view the current comprehensive

plan. The Commission's upcoming workshop (scheduled the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.) will host the director from the RREC to provide details to help the Commission begin its work on the comprehensive plan.

Citizen Comments:

- ✓ Herbert Putz: Concerns focused on the fact that (in his opinion) anyone could come before the Commission to request to start a home business; noted that a recent published article stated that 'exceptions were being given' regarding certain requests; advised of a resident in his area that operates a used vehicle business in a residential area (i.e. complaints filed with no resolution); feels that by approving special use permits in an A1 zone, this converts the property to commercial.

Mr. Williams referenced a case (from 1970) that involved a citizen who desired to open a home business, and proceeded to explain the process by which a special use permit was established (to allow certain uses in an A1 zone), and further advised that:

- If a business in an A1 zone ceases to exist, the property would still be maintained as 'agriculture' in the future
- Most cities have specific areas designated for agriculture, industrial, commercial, residential, and business
- About 80% of the County is zoned A-1
- Requirement for a special use permit is equally applied to everyone within the locality
- Current plan calls for compliance with the existing ordinances and the contents of the comprehensive plan
- Doesn't feel the County can afford to start over at this point
- Feels the County is accomplishing the high level vision to keep the locality as 'agricultural' as possible

- ✓ Signe Putz: Feels the County has had rough times in the past; also feels that in order to live up to the 'vision', the County should take every possible step to live within the 'vision'.

Mr. Williams advised that the 'vision' doesn't state there will not be specific zones (industrial, commercial) or conservation easements, but does state that the County will try to maintain its agricultural area, which means there may be some agriculture zones that may be allowed to be a business by way of a special use permit.

Madison County School Survey:

Barry Penn Hollar, School Board, Chair, noted that the school established a goal to develop positive communication between the School Board, students, parents, and to listen to ideas from the community. In order to attain a more systematic idea of how the community perceives the job being done by the Madison County School Board, a survey has been authorized and initiated (by contract) with a company to help develop a survey, and analyze data received. He further stated the survey will 'go live' next Friday; flyers have been developed to community organizations and for posting at local businesses. The school's website will contain a link (www.madisonschools.k12.va.us); the survey will take about fifteen (15) minutes to complete. Citizens are encouraged to provide feedback.

Comments:

Bill Campbell (Madison County Board of Supervisors): Advised disappointment with the low turnout for tonight's meeting; feels that surveys are a means of reaching out to find out what the citizens want; disappointed in citizens feeling there's no need to get involved; feels the governing boards are members of the County as well; encouraged the citizens to become involved in the community (i.e. attend meetings, complete surveys, etc.)

Commonwealth Attorney:

Clarissa Berry, Commonwealth Attorney, was present and introduced CPO Jon Simmons, Conservation Officer, from the Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries, who will be happy to answer any questions about hunting/fishing regulations; she also introduced Sgt. Randall Richards and Cpl. Jason Kilby of the Madison County Sheriff's Office and thanked them for attending tonight's session.

Chairman Jackson asked if anyone would like to make an opening statement. With no opening statements being brought forth, the floor of the joint town hall meeting was opened for public questions.

3. Town Hall Meeting

Retirement Plans & Actual Revenue vs. Expenditures for FY15-16

Herbert Putz: Questioned the total liability (required of the taxpayers) to fund the current and future retirement plans and what was the excess of actual revenue vs. expenditures for FY15-16; feels there was more revenue and less expense during past years although budgeted funding went into a 'rainy day' fund and then disappeared; feels the County is creating future liability (due to the retirement plan)

Comments from the Board & Citizen(s):

- Chairman Jackson: Advised there has been excess funds from conservative spending which has been allocated into the County's general fund (i.e. 'rainy day fund'); noted that funding hasn't disappeared by any means; the County has discussed initiating capital

projects and/or taking on new debt service, which some of these funds could be utilized for; feels the excess funds have derived from conservative spending on the part of the county and school system; also noted energy efficient initiatives implemented by the school system (i.e. windows, HVAC, lights, etc.) which has precipitated an extensive savings; it's anticipated that further energy saving measures will continue within the future; noted uncertainty about the retirement package at this time

The County Administrator advised that the county and school system 'piggyback' off the statewide Virginia Retirement System, which is managed by the State, and is one of the best retirement systems within the country; he also noted that (as requested by the citizen), a copy of the county's prior audit was provided along with a copy of the current audit report schedule (in draft form), which can be assessed to show any changes in liability

Chairman Jackson took a moment to reiterate the expected guidelines for tonight's meeting session.

Supervisor Campbell: Focused on past budgets and advised that he didn't agree with the past process that was used; he noted that leftover funding 'hasn't gone anywhere' – was allocated into the county's fund balance;; also noted that the budget was constructed based on anticipated revenue; the County has underspent anticipated funding also referenced the revenue the resident (Herbert Putz) has received and the funding he (Herbert Putz) has saved in personal property taxes due to being enrolled in the county's land use program; questioned what more the resident wants 'as an individual taxpayer'

- ✓ Herbert Putz: Noted that every farmer (state/local) got subsidies from the government; noted that he's a 'smart businessman' and took advantage of the government subsidy; advised that (in his opinion) a commercial enterprise is operating within an agricultural zone (next to him); feels the US constitution gives him the right to voice his opinion; feels what's happening next to him is wrong; also noted that he feels there are shortfalls within the locality; advised that he's willing to 'go the extra mile'; reflected on the tremendous expenditure of the county's courthouse project; noted that everyone's time is valuable.
- ✓ Tom Zakielarz (Cub Scoutmaster): Advised that scouts are present today who are working towards community citizenship; advised that he urges the scouts to be a 'part of the solution' when there's a matter of concern; noted that all scouts have read the Constitution and noted that all citizens have 'freedom of speech'; challenged Mr. Putz (and all citizens) to look for an opportunity to serve and be a part of a solution as opposed to just pointing out issues of concerns.

Madison County Schools

Erin Beers: Questioned what the County plans to do for the school system during the upcoming fiscal year.

Comments from the Board(s) & Citizen(s)

Supervisor Campbell: Noted that he's one of the Board's CIP Committee representatives, along with Supervisor McGhee, the County Administrator, School Board Members, Doreen Jenkins, Robert Chappell, and the school Superintendent; the committee is in the process of establishing priorities for school and county building/maintenance items; funding alternatives are also being discussed and researched; feels that both governing boards work for the citizens of Madison County, and also work together in an effort to get things done, whether it be short-term, long-term or mid-range; noted that all tax dollars come from the citizens; both governing boards will need to assess what items are priority; encouraged the citizens to feel free to provide input; also referred to additional funding allocations to the school system attained through an increase in sales tax revenue received within the locality.

Joseph Parker: Noted that he doesn't see where the 'school system is broken', as he isn't hearing anything from the citizens; referenced Supervisor Campbell's comment as to how the CIP committee is working to manage keeping all of the schools intact, up-to-date in order to provide an effective learning environment for our students; feels the County's quality of education is one of the best in the State; referred to the school's percentage rate in several categories (i.e. graduation, drop out, etc.), and feels that Madison has one of the few high schools within the state that offers a dual enrollment program (through a joint effort with Germanna Community College); also focused on the positive aspects of the Governor's School and the manner in which the school system actively recruits the best possible teachers into the school system here, despite competing with some of the larger surrounding localities.

Chairman Jackson: Advised that he attends all school board meetings; referred to the program (with Germanna Community College) that allows students to graduate with an associate's degree, which is an economic advantage, and allows students to get ahead and reduces overall college costs; referred to the 'tier system' that offers a more focused approach to help students who aren't achieving as strongly (i.e. one-on-one interaction), which makes good sense, and can also help with those students at a lower level and help them become more academically successful.

Supervisor Weakley: Noted that the both governing boards will work on fiscal year budgets; referred to 'needs based budgeting'; feels the County will look at what it can fund; also referenced that past culture wasn't as cohesive as it is now, which he feels this is necessary in order to move forward in a positive manner; focused on planning on the overall picture (i.e. capital planning for school/county buildings, infrastructure, etc.) and attaining feedback from the public; referred to funding borrowed for school CIP projects (in the past); feels that both governing boards should always be looking ahead whether it relates to education/curriculum, and see what can be

achieved; feels the associates program is very positive; encouraged the citizens to provide input on anything they'd like to see transpire within the county.

Robert Chappell: Referred to the associate's degree offered to Madison's students; noted that students here take a higher percentage of dual enrollment courses taught by Germanna Community College staff; also noted that school board members recently toured the Madison Primary School and the Waverly Yowell Elementary School – noted the exceptional amount of instruction taking place in these classrooms; will tour the Wetsel Middle School and the Madison County High School tomorrow; noted that the school board added improvement items to be included in the school's five year plan, in an effort to:

- Improve retention of teachers/staff (plus fringe benefits)
- See all four (4) schools become fully accredited
- Expand technical educational program

Mike Fisher: Noted that a lot of people haven't attended meetings over the years because of Herbert Putz – noted that the individual needs to not be a disruption and learn to have more respect for others; he also questioned (to the school board) which school facilities are or aren't fully accredited and asked what is being done to initiate improvement.

Comments from the School Board

Barry Penn Hollar, School Board Chairman: Advised that it's public knowledge that Waverly Yowell Elementary School and the Madison Primary School are not fully accredited and are being focused upon by the State as being problem areas; feels the school board is working hard on how to respond to this issue; noted that the school system has been working with an individual from the State Department of Education in an effort to get the aforementioned schools partially accredited; educational and curriculum changes will need to be made in order to improve testing scores on both campuses. Also noted procedures are being initiated to improve reading and science skills; also advised that the Superintendent feels that improvement at both aforementioned schools is the responsibility of the community.

Robert Chappell: Feels the staff at both campuses are doing all they can do during the current school year to addresses all issues as noted; advised that instructional coaches are being provided in the areas of reading; additional teaching assistants are being hired to provide additional one-on-one instruction to students; students are also staying late to receive additional assistance; feels additional technologies and strategies are now being offered to students, and feels that a noted improvement will be seen in the 2016-2017 school year.

Joseph Parker: Noted that most school systems don't offer specific courses (i.e. algebra) until students reach high school; these courses are now being completed by students at the middle school level, which affects math testing cores at the high school level.

A citizen asked if high math courses (i.e. pre-calculus, trig) could be offered at the high school level instead of being offered as a part of the middle school curriculum.

Joseph Parker: Advised that the school system does offer advanced math classes at the high school level (i.e. Algebra II, Pre-Calculus, Calculus, Trigonometry and Geometry); also believes some of the aforementioned courses are dual enrollment, college level mathematics courses.

Consultant (School Survey)

Teresa Davis (Locust Dale): Referred to a published online survey; questioned how long the survey will be open to the public; asked for some elaboration on this matter.

Barry Penn Hollar, School Board Chairman, advised that the School Board is committed to hearing from the citizens in a variety of ways, and wanted to have a more systematic way of how the community feels about the school system and the school board. In closing, he noted the online survey is professionally designed and hosted by the company that is providing assistance. He noted that the consulting firm has advised that most citizens that plan to participate in a survey process generally do it very quickly (i.e. ten [10] day window), but also noted the school system has the option of keeping the online survey open for the citizens longer, if necessary. It was also noted that flyers have been published and posted.

Mike Mosko (Aroda): Advised that at this time of year, dogs are allowed to run free along his property chasing deer, and advised that he has been advised previously that there isn't much that can be done about that factor; noted there are several coyotes that come on his property; questioned what would be the outcome if he was to take action to eliminate some of the coyotes and accidentally eliminated someone's dog instead.

Jon Simmons, Virginia Conservation Police Officer (assigned to Madison County), encouraged Mike Mosko to contact Madison Animal Control to resolve any issues with dogs running 'at large' that aren't being used for hunting. Information was provided concerning:

- Procedures utilized during hunting season (i.e. big/small game hunting, hound training season)
- The commonwealth's established 'nuisance species law

- Residents encouraged to contact him if illegal 'spotlighting' activity is underway
- Citizens are allowed to trap coyotes, or hire a professional trapper to utilize traps for this purpose
- Traps must be checked every twenty-four hours (to ensure that a dog isn't caught in the trap)

It was also noted that a citizen wouldn't be held liable if a neighbor's dog came onto their private property without permission and became caught in a trap; encouraged anyone with additional concerns on this matter to contact the Commonwealth Attorney or the Sheriff's Office.

Clarissa Berry (Commonwealth Attorney): Noted that the liability of a dog caught in a 'lawful' trap, will more than likely evolve into a civil issue, which is something not within the guidelines of the State Code of Virginia and Virginia State Bar to give the Commonwealth Attorney any means to 'fight' or deal with on a daily basis; she also noted that using traps in a lawful manner is one of the best steps a citizen can take in order to be protected from civil liability; cases involving criminal liability will charge her office with the task of proving the act was one of animal cruelty and intent to inflict harm, pain, experimentation, etc. without just cause on an animal. It was also noted that the commonwealth updated the definition of the statute pertaining to poultry to allow that dogs who kill chickens will not be killed in return; also, if livestock are posed as being in danger (by a dog), owners have the right to shoot/kill any dog.

- Supervisor Campbell: Thanked the Commonwealth Attorney for participating tonight's town hall meeting; feels her presence is most positive during tonight's public meeting process to answer any questions the citizens may have on various issues.
- ✓ Clarissa Berry: Noted that her office is available to provide assistance or answer any concerns the citizens might have.

Mike Fisher: Questioned the heroin epidemic; feels that drugs can destroy the schools and the entire community.

Clarissa Berry: Noted that the heroin epidemic is ongoing; local law enforcement is doing an exceptional job working with the Virginia State Police and the Blue Ridge Narcotics Task Force to focus on efforts of those who may bring heroin into our community; meetings have held with the school Superintendent to initiate an open dialogue. It was also suggested that the school system feel free to present any concerns they feel need to be addressed. Any drug related issues with students is handled through the juvenile court system, which will very different than the adult court system.

November 2016 Election Process

- Supervisor Campbell: Referred to the November 2016 election process; noted that the individuals charged with working the election poles in Madison County are good/honest citizens, despite their personal political standings; also noted that the Registrar has advised that the County is in full compliance with the voting guidelines/procedures as required by the Code of Virginia.

5. Closing Statement(s)

- Supervisor Weakley: Provided accolades to the Nation's military service men (and women); also thanked local law enforcement personnel for attending tonight's meeting.

6. Adjournment

With no further comments or questions being brought forth, Chairman Jackson adjourned tonight's joint town hall meeting.

Approved: November 9, 2016



Joint Town Hall Meeting

**Madison County Board of Supervisors
Madison County School Board
Wednesday, June 29, 2016, 6:00 p.m.
Madison County High School Auditorium**



AGENDA

- 1. CALL TO ORDER**
- 2. PLEDGE AND MOMENT OF SILENCE**
- 3. TOWN HALL MEETING**

4. CLOSING STATEMENTS, Board of Supervisors & School Board

5. ADJOURNMENT